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## CAIRD'S GIFFORD LECTURES

We have in these volumes<sup>1</sup> twenty-seven lectures from the pen of one of the most learned and most able and influential philosophers of our time. He reconstructs and elaborates the Hegelian dialectic with such independence that we sometimes wonder whether he would not have developed much the same general system of thought and belief, had Hegel never been born. Certainly the crystalline clearness and flawless beauty of his style, together with the earnestness and nobility of his thought, have contributed much to the popularity of logical idealism among many English-speaking scholars. And while it is often said today that the influence of the system is on the wane—a statement which is apparently true—still this may be due to the absorption of its ideas by the collective educated consciousness of our time, even more than to refutation and rejection of the system as a whole. It must be admitted, however, that a great change is going on in the philosophical world. Thought is directed, not to the morphology, but to the physiology, of reality, so to speak. The criterion of the “truth” of ideas is not their correspondence to objects, is not even their cognitive efficiency for getting at the “outside” world, but their workability and self-consistency. As in the last analysis we do not know what the eye in essence is, but only know its function, so of ideas. The biological function of ideas and beliefs as of organs of the body is in high favor with men of science today, thus gaining their adhesion to the new philosophy. All this ontological agnosticism is a far cry from the Hegelian gnosticism of which for so long Caird has been our foremost English interpreter. Upon the subject-matter expounded in these lectures he once yet again superposes the old dialectic schematism of his master.

Caird tells us that after he delivered these lectures he rewrote most of them, and added three lectures upon parts of the subject, which he was not able to discuss with sufficient fulness. His aim was, on the basis of the philosophic thought indicated above, to give an account of those ideas of Greek philosophy which have most powerfully affected the subsequent development of theological thought. This purpose naturally led him to confine himself chiefly to Plato and Aristotle, to the chief representatives of the Stoic philosophy, and to Philo and Plotinus among the Neoplatonists. Secondary variations of opinion, especially among the less important writers, he leaves to one side. He has also dealt with many aspects

<sup>1</sup> *The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*. The Gifford Lectures delivered in the University of Glasgow in Sessions 1900-1901 and 1901-2 by Edward Caird. 2 vols. Glasgow: MacLehose; New York: Macmillan, 1904. Vol. I, xviii+382 pages; Vol. II, xii+377 pages, 14s. net.

of the thought of the leading philosophers which do not appear to bear directly upon theology—the development of the logical and ethical elements of the Platonic philosophy, for example; or, of the theoretical and practical philosophy of Aristotle and the Stoics. But he did this because of the difficulty he would otherwise experience in showing the real meaning of the theological speculations of these writers without tracing out their connection with the other aspects of their philosophy. When he came to Plotinus, the case was different. Theology was the center of all his thought, and everything else was to be viewed in relation to it. In this connection what Caird says concerning religion is so important that it may as well be quoted in full: “A man’s religion, if it is genuine, contains the summed-up and concentrated meaning of his whole life; and, indeed, it can have no value except in so far as it does so.” Hence, too, it is obvious, according to Caird, that the theology of a philosopher is the ultimate outcome of his whole view of the universe, and particularly of his conception of the nature of man. This is a further explanation for his having linked very closely together the theology and the philosophy of the men under review.

While there are, of course, an intellectual, an emotional and a volitional element in the religious consciousness, as in every other, Hegel put the emphasis on the first, Schleiermacher on the second, Kant on the third. Here, too, Caird follows Hegel, although conditioned somewhat by the application, since Darwin, of biological, rather than logical evolution to the organic world and to the various departments and interests of human life. Hence Caird insists that “every man’s religion is on the way to become a theology” (p. 8); while Schleiermacher, e. g., and, following him, the Ritschlians, declared that religion is not theology and theology is not religion. “It is essential to faith that it should develop into reason,” says Caird (p. 21). “Philosophy must show itself as the purest form of its [religion’s] consciousness of itself” (p. 24). “Theology is religion brought to self-consciousness” (p. 31). Hence Caird turns to Greek philosophy and gives primary importance to its contribution to theology. It was the thought of Greece which gave to the philosophical inquiries of Christendom a definite method and a definite aim. It was from Greece that the fathers of the church borrowed the forms of thought, the fundamental conceptions of nature and of human life, all the general presuppositions, in fact, which they brought to the interpretation of the Christian faith. Hence the necessity of a knowledge of the Greek theology to “trace with intelligence the evolution of doctrines either in the early or mediaeval or modern times.” True enough. But what light is then thrown upon the religion of the Sermon on the Mount, and of the parables of Jesus—

upon the religion of the good Samaritan, whom Jesus praised despite his ignorance of the theology of the Greek philosophers, and its trinitarian and christological fruition in later reflection; and upon the religion of the prodigal son who needed repentance and a father's forgiveness even more than the philosophic exploration of the consciousness of a Hegelian Absolute, "the reflective analysis of the consciousness of God in its distinctive form" (p. 31)?

GEORGE BURMAN FOSTER

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

### PRESENT-DAY CONCEPTIONS OF THE MORAL PROBLEM

In the pronounced metamorphosis of the thought-world which has characterized the last two generations, no other phase has such significance for the theologian as the growing recognition of the reality, authority, and rationality of the moral. The ethical is coming to its own. Many false prophets have predicted an eclipse, total or partial, of the moral interests. Many other faint hearts have hoped against hope that the glory of the moral world might gain scientific recognition. Meanwhile the natural-science method has been disposed, not without signs of exultation, to annex everything in sight, and to proclaim no "truth" or "method" valid but that of laboratory analysis and historical research. Naturalism has aspired to become a universal theory of reality; and the effect has been confusion and hesitation in the ethical camp, with some evidences of dismay and even some desertions.

The truth is that the whole field of morals has been largely in the hands of its traditional defenders. Dogmatism of varying types has led the defense. While natural science has collected an arsenal of magnificently effective modern weapons defensive and offensive, the moral army is still equipped, in many of its divisions at least, with blunderbusses and flintlocks. The long-range artillery of the enemy has revealed the weakness of our traditional weapons.

But the enemies' searchlight has brought a revelation. We have been firing upon our friends. The militant spirit has been disastrously directed upon all sides, and scientific method must be credited with the discovery of the facts. Dropping the metaphor, let us say that a better theory of knowledge is exposing the fallacy of a false naturalism, and establishing meanwhile the reality of the facts, at least, which ethics have sought to defend. The moral facts have not been shaken. They are native to personal life. Religion and morality have never really been in jeopardy. *We have simply identified facts with explanations.* When